

## 2.14 Alpha Impact Area Proposed Burn, TFTA

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USAG-AK has proposed to burn 28,441 acres in the Tanana Flats Training Area (TFTA), Fort Wainwright (Figure 21). The proposed prescribed burn is primarily within the Alpha Impact Area. The project area is located south of the Tanana River and northeast of Clear Creek Butte on map quadrangle FAI C2 within T.2S., R.1W.; T.2S., R.1E.; T.3S., R.1W. and T.3S., R.1E. The northern boundary of the burn is Salchaket Slough and the western, southern and eastern boundaries are winter trails. The proposed burn area within the Impact Area is an area that has not undergone cultural resources surveys due to the high risk to personnel from unexploded ordnance. The areas outside the boundaries of the Impact Area, but within the proposed burn, have also not undergone cultural resources surveys, primarily due to access difficulties and low cultural resource potential. The entire Tanana Flats area has been subject to fires throughout history as part of the natural environment. No ground disturbance is planned as part of this burn. The purpose of this project is to remove vegetation within the Impact Area so that an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team can clear the area for the placement of new targets.

### ***Survey and Inventory***

Previous work in the vicinity of the proposed project, within the Tanana Flats Training Area, was undertaken primarily in 1979 (Dixon et al. 1980). This work involved preliminary surveys on Clear Creek Butte and Salmon Loaf to its north, as well as other high points in the TFTA. Since that time, periodic visits have been made by BLM, Army and CEMML cultural resources staff to specific archaeological sites or locations in the TFTA, but no large scale surveys have been completed.

In August 2005 an aerial reconnaissance of the proposed burn area was completed by Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Fort Wainwright archaeologist employed by the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML, Colorado State University). The reconnaissance was completed by helicopter and consisted of several flights around the perimeter of the burn area as well as numerous flights over the center portions of the area, all at various altitudes. Also present during this reconnaissance were CEMML forestry and training land managers who identified the burn unit, methods to be used and potential target placement areas.

The majority of the project area consists of an open muskeg environment with scattered small spruce, birch and alder. There are also more dense concentrations of trees, primarily along the small creeks that run through the project area. As noted above, the reconnaissance consisted of flights across the proposed burn area. Particular attention was paid to stream banks, stream crossings, any areas of higher elevation and trails. All of these types of locations were flown over several times, until the principal investigator was confident that there were no historic resources present (as visible from an altitude of several hundred feet).

A metal gate has been installed at one of the trail intersections along the western boundary of the burn unit. The gate was installed to prevent people from entering the Alpha Impact Area via an existing trail. In addition to the existing trails, there are vehicle shells and other pieces of miscellaneous machinery scattered throughout the Impact Area. These items were placed in their current locations by USAG-AK and are used as targets.



This map displays the Alpha Impact Area, Prescribed Burn Area, Tanana Flats Training Area, and Fort Wainwright AK. The map includes a legend, scale bar, north arrow, and coordinate grid. Key features include:

- Legend:** Trails (dashed red line), Burn Area (solid orange area), Impact Area (yellow area), Boundary (black line).
- Scale:** 1:125,000.
- North Arrow:** Points North.
- Coordinate Grid:** Latitude ranges from 68°N to 70°N, and Longitude ranges from 159°E to 160°E.
- Geographic Features:** Tanana River, Bear Creek, Clear Creek, Clear Creek Butte, and various impact areas labeled "Impact Area".

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### **Cultural Resources**

There are no known historic properties located within 1km of the proposed burn area. As noted above, the historic Bonnifield Trail is a portion of the western boundary of the burn unit. Aerial reconnaissance did not identify any features (such as structural remains or other cultural resources) associated with this portion of the trail. A more likely location for remains associated with the trail would be at the topographic feature known as Salmon Loaf, a hill to south and west of the project area, or Clear Creek Butte. The proposed burn should have no effect on the Bonnifield Trail.

### **Results**

A combination of literature review and aerial reconnaissance did not identify any National Register eligible cultural resources within the proposed project area. All other known cultural resources in the TFTA are located outside of the project area. USAG-AK determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project.



*Figure 22. View of proposed burn along its western boundary (gate visible at intersection)*



*Figure 23. General view of proposed burn area*